

Held Together:
The Theology that Holds It All Together
Colossians 1:15-23

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Text Introduction: We are working our way through the book of Colossians. A key phrase of Colossians comes in Colossians 1:17, “And by Him all things hold together.” I love this phrase. This phrase speaks to the preeminence of Jesus. He is all things. If He is all things, He must be first place in my life.

So, we are working through this letter to discover all the ways and in all the things that He holds us together. We started out by saying, “He holds it all together by the Gospel.” The Gospel of Jesus Christ holds us together when everything around us is falling apart. Then, we noted that God gave us the tool called prayer to hold us together. Today, we come to the central truth of this book. Let’s call it the “The Theology that Holds It All Together.”

Text: He is the image of the invisible God,
the firstborn over all creation.

¹⁶ For everything was created by Him,
in heaven and on earth,
the visible and the invisible,
whether thrones or dominions
or rulers or authorities—
all things have been created through Him and for Him.

¹⁷ He is before all things,
and by Him all things hold together.

¹⁸ He is also the head of the body, the church;
He is the beginning,
the firstborn from the dead,
so that He might come to have
first place in everything.

¹⁹ For God was pleased to have
all His fullness dwell in Him,

²⁰ and through Him to reconcile
everything to Himself
by making peace
through the blood of His cross—
whether things on earth or things in heaven.

²¹ Once you were alienated and hostile in your minds because of your evil actions. ²² But now He has reconciled you by His physical body through His death, to present you holy, faultless, and blameless before Him— ²³ if indeed you remain grounded and steadfast in the faith and are not shifted away from the hope of the gospel that you heard. This gospel has been proclaimed in all creation under heaven, and I, Paul, have become a servant of it.

Introduction: Theology! Now, there is a scary word. The word sounds so technical. Maybe even dry. Maybe even boring. You might say that I don’t want to study theology. I don’t want to study God.

Theology, though, is “a word about God.” I remember a book I read years ago on theology by the title, *Thinking about God*. That is what theology is—thinking about God. And, in that sense, we are all theologians. The question is “What kind of theologian are we?” (Joshua Harris) Theology points to God and is practical. (Matt Capps, “Why Theology Matters,” *Baptist Press*, Oct. 15, 2015.)

What we believe about God is going to impact the things we do and the decisions that we make.

At the heart of Paul’s letter to the Colossians is his desire to combat a false teaching about Jesus. It was likely some form of Gnosticism. Gnosticism was quite involved. The central points of Gnosticism was that all matter was evil. So, if all matter was evil, everything material, including the human body, was evil. Therefore, they reasoned that Jesus Christ could not possibly be God.

What we say we believe about God matters about all other matters. So, here we have the “Theology that Holds It All Together.”

The Revelation of Jesus as God!

In relationship to God, He is the image of the invisible God.

If Jesus is God, you would expect to find the following in Him.

- Sinless—even Pilate said, “I find no fault in Him.”
- Speak the most profound words ever spoken—After Sermon on the Mount, His listeners were amazed at His teaching. Officers summoned by Pharisees said, “Never has a man spoken the way this man speaks.” (John 7:46)
- Perform miracles
- Know the future
- Live forever

In relationship to Creation, He is the first-born of all creation.

Meaning He is the highest ranking one.

The idea of pre-eminence dominates this passage and this book.

In relationship to the unseen world, He is the Creator and the King.

He is the reason everything exists. Even the angels who announced His birth were created by Him.

In relationship to the church, He is the Head.

In relationship to the resurrection, He is the One who holds the keys.

C. S. Lewis puts an exclamation point on the importance of Christ's deity. "I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him: "I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept his claim to be God." That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to." (C.S. Lewis)

The Reason God Became Jesus

To reconcile us to Himself.

Are you confused as to why Jesus came? He came for this one purpose—to reconcile us to Himself.

And the text is clear as to how He reconciled us to Himself—through the blood.

And the text is clear as to what this means—that we might become holy!

Our Response to Jesus

- Believe—Theology matters. What we believe about God matters. If we believe that He is above all things, we see the connection that He is to have first place in our lives.
- Worship—This is a song.
- Surrender—So that, He might have first place in everything.
- Tell—So, we have challenged you with **3151**. You want to really make a difference in the world? Tell someone about Jesus.